

May 4, 2004

Dear Colleague,

In response to the VRSA fax broadcast sent April 27, 2004, several laboratories have had questions about the recommendation to use the vancomycin screening agar for *Staphylococcus aureus* isolates.

This media is available from most major media manufacturers. It is a brain heart infusion agar containing 6 ug/mL of vancomycin, intended for screening enterococci for vancomycin-resistance. (Please note that this is different from the esculin-containing formula used for primary plating of specimens to screen for VRE). The vancomycin screening agar is not FDA-cleared for use with *Staphylococcus aureus*, so the manufacturers will tell you that it is not intended for this use (if you ask). However the literature, NCCLS documents, and now the CDC do support the use of this agar. In-house validation studies are not possible at this time due to the lack of Vancomycin-intermediate *S. aureus* (VISA) and vancomycin-resistant *S. aureus* (VRSA) control strains.

Quality Control should be performed each day of testing with *S. aureus* ATCC 25923 (Disk diffusion QC strain) or *S. aureus* ATCC 29213 (Oxacillin-Salt Agar QC strain) as the susceptible control and *Enterococcus faecalis* ATCC 51299 as the resistant control. Plates are inoculated with 1 to 10 ul of a 0.5 McFarland direct colony suspension; up to six isolates may be tested per plate. Plates are incubated at 35 degrees C, ambient air (no CO₂). Growth of two or more colonies is considered a positive result, and plates should be examined carefully with both reflected and transmitted light. Plates must be incubated a full 24 hours before calling negative.

For more detailed information and further references, go to the CDC website URL at

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/hip/vanco/VANCO.HTM#3>

Click on

[Laboratory Testing and Practices](#)

Then click on [Laboratory Detection of VISA/VRSA](#)

[Laboratory Testing Algorithm](#) is also helpful. We have attached a copy of the algorithm to this fax.

Also, an archive of previous MDCH broadcast faxes will soon be posted on our website at www.Michigan.gov/mdchlab.

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